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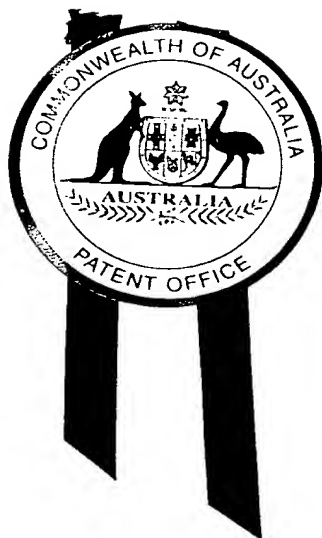
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I, MARIO PERUSSICH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PATENT SERVICES, hereby certify that the annexed are true copies of the Provisional specification and drawing(s) as filed on 13 November 1996 in connection with Application No. PO 3595 for a patent by ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD.

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WITNESS my hand this Nineteenth
day of November 1997

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AUSTRALIA

Patents Act 1990

ARISTOCRAT LEISURE INDUSTRIES PTY LTD

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

Invention Title:

AUSTRALIAN	
PROVISIONAL NO.	DATE OF FILING
P03595	13 NOV. 96
PATENT OFFICE	

Gaming Machine

The invention is described in the following statement:

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to gaming machines of the type generally referred to as slot machines, fruit machines, or poker machines, and in particular the invention provides a game to be played on such a machine.

Description of the prior art

Players who regularly play gaming machines, quickly tire of particular games and it is therefore necessary for manufacturers of gaming machines to come up with either innovative game features that add interest to the games provided on such machines, or provide new games in order to keep the players amused and willing to continue playing gaming machines.

Recently, the gaming machine market has experienced considerable growth and there is intense competition between manufacturers of gaming machines to supply the various existing and new venues. Clearly the revenue raised by an operator of a particular venue depends on the amount of money wagered. The amount of money wagered on a particular machine is related to the popularity of the machine. Thus when selecting a supplier of gaming machines, the operator of venue often pays close attention to the popularity of the various games with their patrons.

Therefore, gaming machine manufacturers are keen to devise games which are popular with players, as a mechanism for improving sales.

In particular, manufacturers regularly devise new games or game features which have not previously been seen on slot machines, in order to stimulate renewal of player interest.

The two most popular types of gaming machine either offer card games, particularly poker and variations of that game, or are machines of the traditional, and somewhat confusingly named, poker machine style (also known as fruit machines) in which the display means comprises a set of rotatable reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols, or a video simulation thereof.

However, even with the best efforts of game designers introducing features such as multi line plays, wild cards, and other similar features designed to stimulate player interest, the basic games have remained essentially the same. Gaming manufacturers have been unable to devise a new game which has achieved the same level of success and player interest as card machines and poker machines.

One game which is popular in clubs, although not on gaming machines is keno. In keno, a player picks a selection of numbers ranging from 1 to 80. A series of numbers is then drawn at random from the set 1 to 80. The player wins or loses depending on how many of the numbers the player selected, match those which have been drawn at random.

One popular version of the game, known as "Club Keno" can be simultaneously played at a large number of venues in Australia. The venues include various clubs and hotels and are linked to a central system controlling the game by satellite or other suitable communication means.

One game of keno is played every 15 minutes. Each player marks off their chosen numbers on a game card. The player then passes that game card and their stake money to a cashier at the venue, who processes their game card, enters the player for the next draw of keno and gives them a ticket showing the number of the game to be played and the numbers the player has chosen.

One or more television screens in the venue shows an image of a board having the available numbers in the game, i.e. 1 to 80. The game commences and a series of numbers are drawn at random from the set 1 to 80. The television screen indicates which numbers have been drawn at random by displaying a ball showing the drawn number growing and apparently shooting outwards from the centre of the screen. The ball is then displayed at one side of the board and the particular square on the board which shows that particular number changes colour.

Keno and other bingo and lotto type games are particularly popular, because players choose their own numbers for each game, and therefore have more input into the game and consequently believe they can influence the outcome of the game if they choose the numbers correctly. However, whilst keno type games are perfectly satisfactorily as a diversion or side show in a hotel or club, those games are much too slow for use as a game for a gaming machine, and they supply insufficient excitement to persuade a person to play the game on a stand alone gaming machine. Further, because the game is slow, it does not achieve a sufficiently high turnover for use on a gaming machine.

It is an object of the present invention to alleviate the disadvantages of the prior art discussed above and to provide an improved game for a gaming machine.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention consists of a gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control images displayed on the display means, the game control means being arranged to play a game in which a player makes a selection, on the machine, of a series of indicia
5 chosen from a larger group of indicia, the game control means being arranged to generate a series of indicia drawn at random from the larger group of indicia, the display means being adapted to display, in a predetermined location those indicia which have been selected for
10 comparison with the players selected indicia, with a prize being awarded if more than a predetermined number of matches occur, characterised in that a plurality of games are played in parallel, with the indicia drawn at random for each game being drawn from separate groups initially corresponding to the indicia contained in the larger group of indicia, but with each game
15 utilising the same player selection of indicia, and in that each game has a predetermined display area on the screen area distinct from the other games.

Thus the present invention provides a bingo type game in which a player need only make one selection of indicia, such as numbers, but which, by playing a number of games in parallel and selecting different, potentially
20 matching, numbers at random for each game, and displaying all the games on screen creates a game with increased player interest.

In a typical embodiment the indicia are numbers.

In a preferred embodiment, the predetermined display areas on the screen which are arranged to display the numbers generated by the game
25 control means, are a series of columns, arranged side by side. As each separate game proceeds the display is arranged to show the series of potentially matching numbers for each game drop into the column associated with that particular game to be retained for display purposes in that column if that number corresponds to one of the numbers chosen by the
30 player. If the number does not match the chosen numbers it is caused to disappear from the column.

In a preferred embodiment one of the two columns either side of the series of columns displays the numbers chosen by the player. The other of the two columns may display the prizes awarded for each quantity of
35 matching machines.

Typically, all the selected numbers are displayed as a representation of a numbered balls.

In a preferred embodiment, the game includes a wild ball feature in which a ball drops into the first game column adopts a value which equates with one of the numbers chosen by the player, registers in the first column, and then transfers to the next adjacent column leaving a duplicate of itself in the first column, and continues the process transferring from the, second column to the third, the third to the fourth, etc. If the wild ball lands in a column and that column already has received and retained a ball having the number adopted by the wild ball, the wild ball may change to a different one of the players preselected numbers which is not already present in that column, before transferring to the next column.

A specific embodiment of the invention will now be described by way of example only and with reference to the accompanying drawing in which Figure 1 shows a display for a game embodying the present invention.

Referring to Figure 1, the screen shows a display having seven columns numbered 12 to 24 respectively. The far left hand column 12 displays the numbers chosen by the player. The far right hand column displays the prizes awarded for a given number of matches. In the particular embodiment of the game shown, a player may pick between 2 and 10 numbers from a group of 80 numbers being 1 through 80.

In the particular game shown, the player has selected 10 numbers and these are shown as balls in column 12. Once a player inputs the chosen numbers into the gaming machine by pressing appropriate selection buttons, not shown, balls then are shown dropping into each column in sequence. The balls are retained in a particular column if they correspond to any of the selected numbers in column 12. Ten balls in total drop into each column, unless the player is awarded one or more extra balls.

In the described embodiment each separate game, played in parallel, has its own starting group comprising numbers 1 to 80. The games are independent, so that the numbers selected for one game do not influence the numbers selected for another. Numbers may drop into the columns simultaneously, i.e. one number drops into each column at the same time or the numbers may drop in sequence, one column after another although the sequence is desirably fast to retain player interest.

The game includes a wild ball feature in which a ball drops into the first game column 14, adopts a value which equates with one of the numbers chosen by the player registers in the first column and then transfers to the next adjacent column 16 leaving a duplicate of itself in the first column and
 5 continues the process transferring from the second column 16 to the third 18, the third 18 to the fourth 20 etc. If the wild ball lands in a column and that column already has received and retained a ball having the number adopted by the wild ball, the wild ball may change to a different one of the players preselected numbers which is not already present in that column
 10 before transferring to the next column. The wild ball may of course first appear in a column other than the first column, say the third column 20, in which case it will just travel to columns 20 and 22.

The player wins or loses depending on the number of matches made in each game i.e. the number of balls retained in a column corresponding to
 15 the numbers picked by the player.

Thus, for example, game 3 shown in column 18 had no matches, so the player wins nothing for that game; column 22, game 5, had one hit which again wins nothing; column 16, game 2 had 3 hits which wins 2 credits; column 14, game 1 had 7 hits which wins the player 100 credits;
 20 and game 4 had 10 hits which corresponds to a jackpot win of 10,000 credits.

Clearly the manner of awarding prizes to a player, depending on the number of hits, is calculated so that on average, game will provide an appropriate rate of return as required by the regulations to the player, and also provide a profit to the gaming machine operator.

25 The player may choose how many parallel games they wish to play, and pays for each game with credits. The player also pays for each number selected.

Thus, the described embodiment of the present invention enables a player to play a number of keno or bingo type games simultaneously but in
 30 which the player only has to make one selection of a series of numbers and in which a large number of games can be played in parallel, at the same time, with each game being different because different numbers are being dropped into each game column. Thus the game can be made much more exciting and faster moving than a single game of keno and each parallel will
 35 typically have a different result.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to
5 be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

Dated this thirteenth day of November 1996

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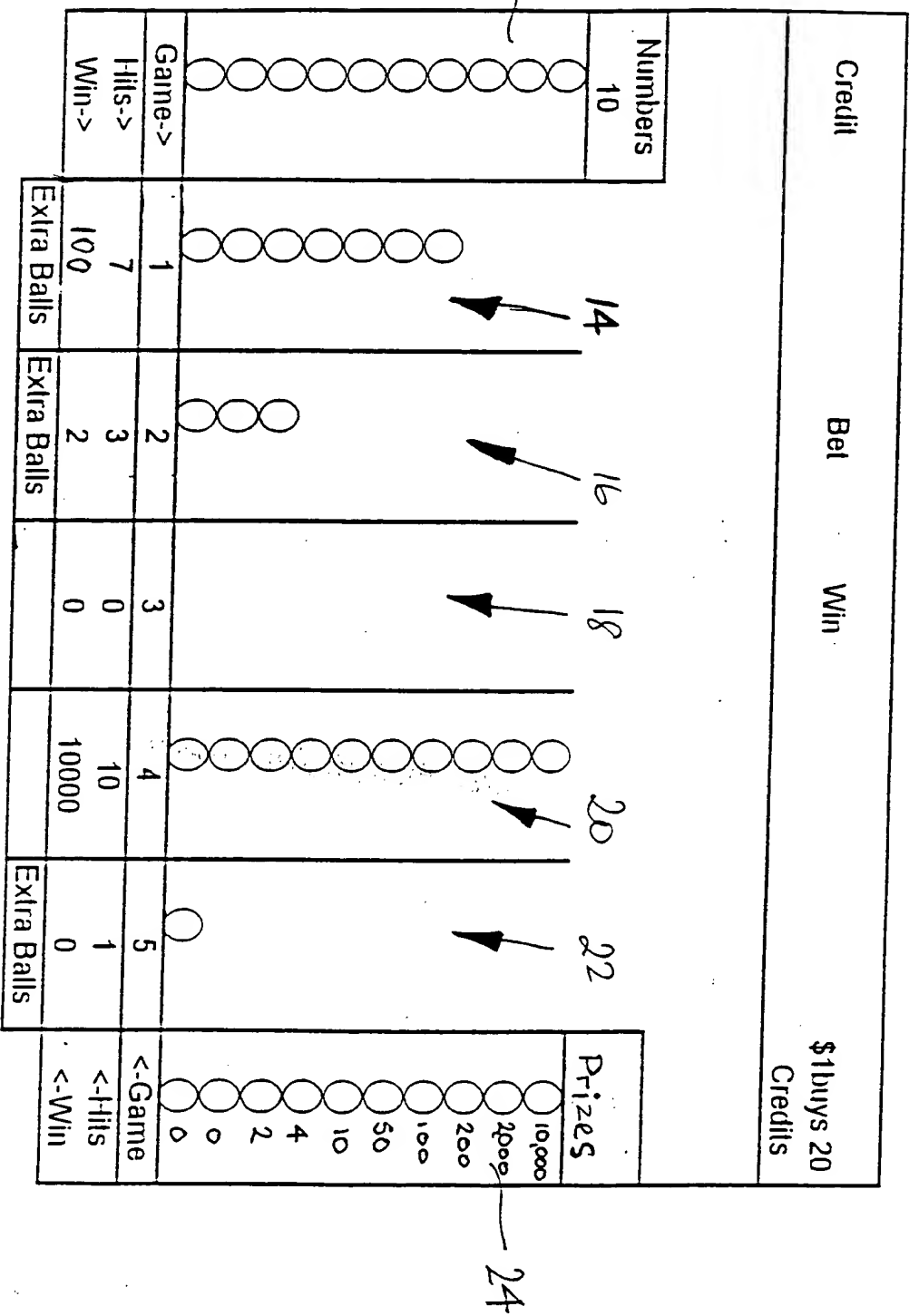


FIG. 1

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